

COOKING WITH HERBS (from <http://www.theherbgarden.ie/cookingwithherbs.htm>)

The Basics

Wash the herbs in cold water and pat dry in a clean tea towel. Generally, the leaves are removed from the stem.

If the plants have soft, lush leaves, add the chopped herb at the end of cooking, in order to retain full flavor, color and nutritional content – eg. parsley, chervil, chives, basil, mint, coriander, dill, salad rocket.

Herbs with tougher leaves, generally have a stronger flavor and are usually added at the start of cooking – eg. sage, rosemary, thyme, winter savory. These herbs can also be added towards the end of cooking, but in this case they need to be very finely chopped and used sparingly. Whole sprigs can be added to soups, stews, casseroles, roasts and marinades. They are removed before serving.

Very tough herbs are added to dishes that require long, slow cooking, such as soups, stews, casseroles and roasts. They are then removed before serving – eg. bay.

Herbs with a delicate flavor enhance mildly flavored foods. The more strongly flavored herbs combine well with robust, strongly flavored food types.

Herb Seed/Spices

For maximum flavor, use whole seed and grind it before use. Roasting seed further intensifies the flavor. Heat a heavy-based pan, ideally cast iron, add the seeds and toss or stir over gentle heat, until they begin to brown lightly and release their aroma. Use whole, or allow to cool before grinding.

Food-Herb List

We all have tried and tested dishes that we cook regularly. By using different herbs, we can subtly change the flavor of our standard dishes and add to our culinary repertoire. The following list suggests herbs that combine particularly well with base ingredients. Use the list as a guide and discover the versatility that herbs can add to your culinary skills. Remember there are no rules. The more you experiment, the more you will learn.

STOCKS	bay, chervil, chives, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme
SOUPS	bay, chervil, coriander, chives, dill, fennel, lovage, mint, parsley, sorrel, oregano, marjoram, nettle, tarragon, thyme
FISH	
GENERAL	bay, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, lemon balm, lemon thyme, sorrel, parsley
SALMON & TROUT	basil, chervil, chives, dill, fennel, lemon balm, marjoram, sorrel, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

OILY FISH	chives, dill, fennel, lemon thyme, rosemary, savory, thyme
SHELLFISH	basil, chervil, chives, dill, fennel, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme
POULTRY & GAME	
CHICKEN/TURKEY	basil, bay, chervil, chives, coriander, fennel, horseradish, lemon balm, lemon thyme, marjoram, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
DUCK	basil, bay, hyssop, juniper, lemon thyme, lovage, marjoram, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
PIGEON	bay, chervil, chives, lemon thyme, marjoram, mustard, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
RABBIT/HARE	bay, chervil, chives, dill, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
PHEASANT	bay, chervil, chives, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
MEAT	
BEEF	bay, chervil, chives, horseradish, lovage, marjoram, mustard, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
LAMB	bay, chervil, chives, coriander, cumin, lovage, marjoram, mint, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme
PORK	bay, chervil, chives, coriander, cumin, lovage, marjoram, mustard, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
HAM	bay, chervil, chives, juniper, lovage, marjoram, mustard, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme
LIVER/OFFAL	bay, chervil, chives, dill, juniper, lovage, marjoram, mustard, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme
VEGETABLES	
ARTICHOKES	basil, bay, chervil, coriander, dill, parsley, tarragon, thyme
ASPARAGUS	basil, chervil, dill, parsley, tarragon
AVOCADO	basil, chives, coriander, dill, parsley, tarragon

AUBERGINE	basil, chervil, dill, oregano, parsley, tarragon, thyme
BEANS	basil, bay, caraway, cumin, dill, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme
BEETROOT	chives, dill, horseradish, mustard, parsley, tarragon
BROCCOLI	chervil, cumin, mint, mustard
CABBAGE	bay, caraway, cumin, juniper, mustard, sage, thyme
CARROTS	basil, chervil, chives, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme
CAULIFLOWER	bay, caraway, chives, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, parsley
CELERY	chervil, dill, mint, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme
COURGETTE	basil, chervil, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary
CUCUMBER	borage, dill, mint, oregano, parsley
FENNEL	chervil, dill, mustard, oregano, parsley, tarragon
FRENCH BEANS	basil, dill, marjoram, oregano, parsley, savory, tarragon
LEEKs	chervil, chives, dill, parsley, rosemary
LENTILs	chives, coriander, cumin, mint, oregano, parsley
MUSHROOMs	basil, chervil, chives, dill, marjoram, oregano, parsley, savory, rosemary, tarragon, thyme
ONION	chives, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme
PARSNIP	coriander, cumin, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme
PEAS	basil, chervil, coriander, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, savory, sorrel, tarragon
PEPPERS	basil, chervil, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme
POTATOES	basil, chervil, chives, coriander, cumin, dill, horseradish, lovage, mint, mustard, nettle, parsley, rosemary, savory, sorrel, thyme

PUMPKIN	coriander, cumin, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme
SPINACH	borage, chervil, cumin, coriander, lovage, marjoram, mint, mustard, parsley, sorrel
TOMATOES	basil, chervil, chives, dill, lovage, marjoram, mint, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, sorrel, thyme
TURNIPS	coriander, cumin, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme
RICE	basil, bay, chives, cumin, coriander, dill, lemon thyme, marigold petals, parsley, rosemary, saffron, thyme
EGGS	basil, chervil, chives, dill, fennel, marjoram, oregano, parsley, sorrel, tarragon
CHEESE	basil, chervil, chives, cumin, dill, fennel, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sorrel, tarragon, thyme
STUFFINGS	all - apart from very tough herbs
SALADS	all - apart from very tough herbs
FRUIT	angelica, anise hyssop, basil, borage, lavender, lemon balm, lemon thyme, lemon verbena, mint, sweet cicely
BREADS	anise, caraway, cumin, coriander, dill, fennel, poppy seed, rosemary, saffron, thyme
BISCUITS	anise, caraway, lavender, poppy seed, rosemary
EDIBLE FLOWERS	borage, chives, clove pinks, elder, heartsease, muskmallow, nasturtium, rose, salad rocket, sweet rocket

Note

As garlic and black pepper combine well with almost any savory dish, I have not included them in the list.

SAMPLE MENU

The following simple and very basic menu gives an idea of how the food/herb list can be used to adapt any dish.

STARTER

Smoked Trout with Dill Mayonnaise

Arrange the trout on serving plates. Mix some finely chopped dill with the mayonnaise, either home made or good quality bought. Put a dollop of mayo on each plate, or serve separately in ramekins. Garnish with lemon slices and dill sprigs. Serve with brown bread. Creme fraiche or Greek yoghurt can be used instead of mayonnaise.

Variations

Parma Ham with Lovage and Mustard
Smoked Chicken with Tarragon and Horseradish
Asparagus with Chervil

SOUP

Potato and Nettle Soup

Saut  some finely chopped leeks or onions in a little butter or oil. Add the peeled and diced potatoes and cook for about 5 minutes. Add enough chicken or vegetable stock to cover the potatoes and simmer for about 30 minutes. Add a large handful of nettle leaves and cook for a further 5 minutes. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and puree with a hand blender. Garnish with a drizzle of cream or pesto.

Variations

Pumpkin Soup with Coriander
Chicken Soup with Chervil
Mushroom Soup with Dill

MAIN COURSE

Chicken with Tarragon Sauce

Saut  some chicken fillets in a little butter. When they are cooked, remove from the pan and keep warm. Add some cream to the pan & stir until the sauce has thickened. Add some finely chopped tarragon and black pepper. Pour over the chicken and garnish with a sprig of tarragon. Creme fraiche or yoghurt can be used instead of cream. Whiskey or brandy can be added to the pan before the cream, for a richer sauce.

Variations

Salmon Cutlet with Dill
Fillet Steak with Horseradish
Mushrooms with Marjoram.

Potato Cakes with Herbs

Add plenty of finely chopped herbs to basic mashed potatoes. Form into cakes and fry in a mixture of butter and olive oil, until crisp and golden. For best results use a cast iron pan.

Variations

This basic recipe can be adapted in numerous ways. All of the Allium family (ie.

onions, garlic, scallions, leeks, chives, etc.) combine well with potatoes, so I would usually include at least one. Spinach is also good. Other ideas - finely diced smoked ham or fish, tomatoes, peas, peppers, chilies, mushrooms, olives, sun dried tomatoes, grated cheese, spices, etc.

Steamed Vegetables with Herbs

Lightly steam the vegetables. Toss in melted butter and mix through some finely chopped herbs.

Variations

Carrots with Mint

French Beans with Summer Savory

Broccoli with Marjoram

Roast Vegetables with Herbs

Place the vegetables in a roasting tin and drizzle with olive oil. Seeds, whole or ground, and sprigs of tough leafed herbs can be added at this stage. Roasting time depends on the choice and size of the vegetables. Soft leafed herbs should be added at the end of cooking.

Variations

Carrots, Parsnips and Turnips with Cumin, Coriander and Rosemary

Aubergines (eggplant), Peppers and Tomatoes, with Oregano and Thyme

Potatoes with Coriander and Cumin

DESSERT

Mango and Raspberry with Mint and Basil

Puree the mango with some mint. Puree the raspberries with cinnamon basil. Pour the coulis onto serving plates. Top with ice-cream and chocolate sauce. Garnish with mint leaves and borage flowers.

Variations

Kiwi with Applemint

Strawberry with Basil

Blackberry with Lemon Verbena

BON APPETIT!

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